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Message Text

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17
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1. THE MAR 24 ISSUE OF EL TIEMPO CARRIED AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW GIVEN BY PRES LOPEZ TO THE ARGINE-BASED "AGENCIA LATIN" ON THE EVE OF LOPEZ' DEPARTURE FOR PANAMA.

2. COVERING A NUMBER OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOPICS, THE PRES LED OFF WITH COMMENTS ON THE OAS AND THE PROPOSED "LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM" (SELA). IN WHAT THE WRITER DESCRIBED AS "AN ENERGETIC DEFENSE OF THE OAS. LOPEZ STATED THAT "COLOMBIA HAS ALWAYS HAD THE IDEA THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE US IN THE OAS DOES NOT PROVIDE THE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO DOMINATE THE LA COUNTRIES BUT INSTEAD PROVIDES THE LA COUNTRIES THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPOSE CERTAIN RULES ON AMERICAN UNITY." "SELA", WHICH WAS PROPOSED BY MEXICO, SUPPORTED BY VENEZUELA AND HAS THE "SYMPATHY" OF COLOMBIA "CAN BECOME AN IMPORTANT FORUM FOR HARMONIZING POLICIES BUT AT NO TIME CAN IT SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OAS", ACCORDING TO LOPEZ. THE PRES BELIEEVES THAT THE OAS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL FOR LA AND "SHOULD NOT BE REPLACED BY AN ORG WHICH WOULD LEAVE OUT THE US

AND WHOSE PRINCIPLE WOULD BE CONFRONTATION."

3. LOPEZ EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PANAMA, CITING PANAMA'S LARGE PURCHASES FROM COLOMBIA, THE CRITICAL NATURE OF THE CANAL TO ALL OF LA AND THE VALUE OF PANAMA AS A POSSIBLE FUTURE LINK TO CUBA. HE ALSO UNDERLINED COLOMBIA'S CLOSE GOOD RELATIONS WITH
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VENEZUELA. LOPEZ DAMPENED SPECULATION REGARDING AN EARLY CASTRO

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VISIT TO COLOMBIA, BUT WELCOMED THE INVITATION TO LOPEZ TO VISIT THE US, SAYING THAT IT WAS IN RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATURE OF HIS GOVT.

4. ON THE NATIONAL FRONT, LOPEZ ADMITTED DIFFICULTY IN MAKING GOOD HIS PROMISE TO MAKE COLOMBIA THE "JAPAN OF SA" AND BLAMED WORLD RECESSION. THE PRES ACKNOWLEDGED STAGNATION IN COLOMBIA'S OIL INDUSTRY THEN BROADLY HINTED AT A COMING GASOLINE PRICE RISE TO STIMULATE EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION. CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW, LOPEZ PROUDLY REFERRED TO HIS GOVT'S "EXPERIMENT IN LIBERTY", AND AS EXAMPLES OF THIS "NEW TENDENCY" CITED THE RECENT RECOGNITION OF THE COMMUNIST ORIENTED LABOR UNION, CSTC AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A MARXIST TO THE POST OF RECTOR OF THE NATIONAL UNIV, THEN BALANCED THE REFS BY POINTING TO THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEMBERS OF HIS LIBERAL PARTY GOVT. VAKY

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